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Author:

U.S. Congress. House.

Title:

Investigation of Works  
Progress Administration...

Place:

[Washington, D.C.]

Date:

[1940]

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## U. S. Congress. House. Committee on appropriations.

... Investigation of Works progress administration (now  
Work projects administration) under House resolution no. 130... Report. <Pursuant to H. Res. no. 130> ... (Washington,  
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Union calendar no. 858.

Submitted by Mr. Taylor. Committed to the Committee of the whole  
House on the state of the Union, May 15, 1940.

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1858- II. Cannon, Clarence Andrew, 1879- III. Title.

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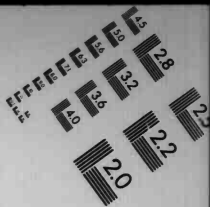
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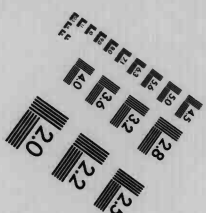
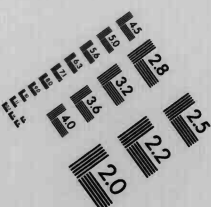
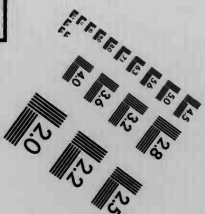
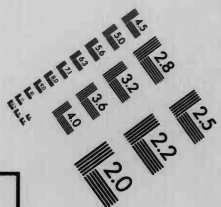
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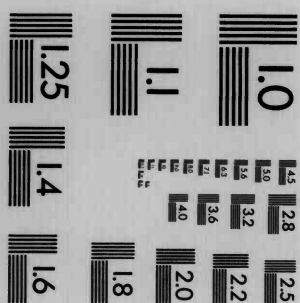
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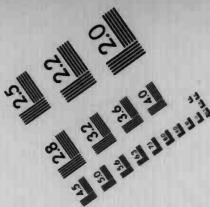
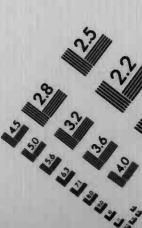
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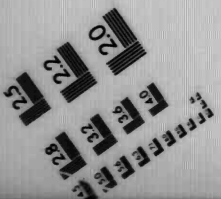
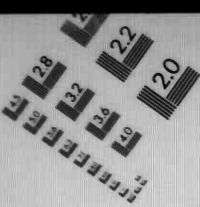
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INVESTIGATION OF WORKS PROGRESS  
ADMINISTRATION

U.S. Congress - House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations

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INVESTIGATION OF WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
(NOW WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION)  
UNDER HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 130

MAY 15, 1940.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state  
of the Union

Mr. TAYLOR, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted  
the following

REPORT

[Pursuant to H. Res. No. 130]

The Committee on Appropriations submits the following report pursuant to House Resolution No. 130 directing an investigation and study of the Works Progress Administration (now Work Projects Administration):

The House of Representatives by the adoption of House Resolution No. 130 of the Seventy-sixth Congress, passed March 27, 1939, directed the Committee on Appropriations to make a study and investigation of the Works Progress Administration (now Work Projects Administration) and the administration of the laws, regulations, and orders administered by it. The resolution authorized the investigation to be made by the committee as a whole or by subcommittee and pursuant to this authorization the committee by resolution adopted April 4, 1939, authorized the appointment of a subcommittee to carry out the direction of the House under the resolution. Pursuant to this authority the chairman designated the subcommittee on Deficiency Appropriations to act accordingly. That subcommittee has considered all of the emergency relief appropriation bills and was the logical selection for this duty.

The subcommittee organized promptly, selected Mr. J. O'Connor Roberts, as counsel, and made plans to pursue the investigation actively pending the preparation of the emergency relief appropriation act for the present fiscal year which had to become law prior to July 1, 1939.



The subcommittee selected a corps of investigators most of whom had been employed by the Sheppard campaign committee of the Senate in connection with the 1938 elections and in which investigation W. P. A. activities were involved in some areas to a considerable extent. These investigators were supplemented by investigators from the General Accounting Office, the Procurement Division (Public Buildings Branch), and other Government agencies for short periods at a time.

The House voted a preliminary allocation from its contingent fund of \$25,000 and subsequently raised this amount to \$100,000. The subcommittee has expended to the end of April 1940 the sum of \$72,237.69, leaving a balance of \$27,762.31 to finance the activities of the subcommittee from May 1, 1940, to the end of the present Congress, at which time the authority of the committee under House Resolution 130 terminates. Any balance which remains at that time will revert automatically.

With the funds available the subcommittee realized that it would not be possible to make a complete investigation of every activity of W. P. A. in every State. Consequently it was determined to make "spot" checks in certain instances and in others to make more detailed and extended investigations depending upon particular conditions and particular types of operations to the end that a fair cross section of W. P. A. might be viewed. Particular attention was paid to complaints that had been made to the subcommittee by members of Congress and by individual citizens and organizations throughout the country. In selecting the localities in which investigations were undertaken or in determining that an investigation would not be pursued in a particular State or locality no political considerations entered into the decision. There has been cooperative accord between the majority and minority members of the subcommittee throughout the life of the investigating subcommittee and while members may have differed in their views as to the conclusions to be drawn from the investigation there has been freedom of access of all members to subcommittee records and investigators' reports. The subcommittee also has acceded willingly to requests and suggestions of all members for the pursuit of particular investigations and attention to complaints.

The subcommittee had investigations made of W. P. A. activities in the District of Columbia, New York City, and in the following States, namely, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Washington.

The first hearings held by the subcommittee were on April 11, 1939, with Col. F. C. Harrington, Administrator of the W. P. A. Following that date, as investigators' reports became available, the subcommittee held open hearings on those reports and furnished an opportunity to the W. P. A. to offer testimony in rebuttal either by direct evidence of witnesses or by the filing for the record of statements and exhibits in explanation or refutation of the findings of investigators. The hearings of the first session of this Congress are printed as parts 1 and 2 of the series of hearings of the investigating subcommittee (copies attached) and additional copies are available for distribution.

During the course of these hearings in the spring of 1939, the subcommittee was obliged to divert its attention from the investigation to the preparation of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1939 which had to become law on July 1, 1939, in order to prevent a hiatus in the program for the employment of the needy. The act which is in effect for the current fiscal year has brought the best control and administration in W. P. A. which has been in effect since the establishment of the agency. Many new features were written into that law which had the effect of improving the program, increasing sponsors' contributions, insuring that the funds intended for employment of needy persons reached that end.

The committee has been severely criticized for many of the features of the current law and, during the progress of the bill in its legislative stages and at times during the progress of the investigation, the members of the subcommittee were subjected to unusual criticism, personal abuse, and some threats of personal injury. It is sufficient to say that the current law has vindicated itself through an improvement of the program and a better and more just and more economical distribution of the work-relief benefits under the act. If the investigation does not result in another single change in the activities of the W. P. A., the new provisions of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1939 have redounded to the credit and vindicated the judgment of the members of the subcommittee, the full committee, and the Congress in enacting that law.

The investigation was resumed after the enactment of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1939 and has continued to date on a diminished scale and with a reduced staff of investigators. The subcommittee at this session has received from its counsel a summary report on the investigations conducted during the period since the first session. This summary report is printed as pages 1 to 94, inclusive, of part 3 of the series of hearings of the investigation (copy attached). The report was furnished to Hon. J. M. Carmody, Federal Works Administrator and Col. F. C. Harrington, Commissioner of Work Projects, in order that they might have an opportunity to examine this material and make such comments or offer such explanations or refutations as they might desire. Colonel Harrington, accompanied by the W. P. A. administrator for New York City, Colonel Somervell, testified in answer to statements in counsel's report and they were afforded the privilege of filing for printing in the record such material in explanation as they did not wish to offer in oral testimony. The subcommittee also took testimony from some of its investigators on certain items of their reports. All of this material appears in part 3 of the investigating hearing. The subcommittee counsel has also prepared and filed, and there is printed as part 4 (copy attached) of the series of hearings of investigation, memorandum of substantiating detail in support of certain material in counsel's summary report.

In the course of the investigations wherever reports and findings of investigators disclosed that matters should be called to the attention of a United States district attorney that has been or will be done and the evidence turned over and the investigators made available as witnesses where needed.

Much of the criticism of W. P. A. voiced in the debate on the adoption of House Resolution 130 authorizing this investigation of W. P. A. centered about political activity in the 1938 elections and

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about matters of administration of work projects and expenditure of funds.

The Work Projects Administration has been in operation about 4½ years. In that time it has expended approximately \$7,500,000,000 of Federal money. It has given employment to nearly 8,000,000 different persons during that period. It has been the largest single administrative operation of civilian employment ever undertaken by this or probably any other government. A quarter of a million projects sponsored by States, municipalities, and other public bodies have been operated. There is a wide difference of opinion as to the efficiency and economy with which this has been done. The undertaking in its very nature does not lend itself effectively to either feature of administration. There is more of the human element involved than in any other governmental operation. Needy persons and some not needy seek placement on the program and not all can be accommodated and never have been so employed. States and local communities want projects. The Federal expenditure has, with the exception of the amounts expended on Federal projects, been a grant to States and local communities. The desire for these projects is overwhelming. The Federal grants serve to keep down local taxation and avoid the incurrence of indebtedness for public improvements.

Abuses existed more pronouncedly in the earlier years of the program when it apparently seemed more necessary to give unemployed and hungry people something to do than it was to develop the program slowly and furnish general relief along with it until a sound operation could be developed. Much of the criticism of W. P. A., aside from that arising from political activity, has resulted from the precipitate inauguration of the program. Inherent weaknesses of administration, both of organization and management methods, had opportunity to become rooted and their elimination has been difficult and slow.

The investigation has divulged many past misdeeds. Some were known to W. P. A. authorities and nothing was done about them. Some were not known to them and W. P. A. authorities disputed the findings or defended the practice. Some W. P. A. is willing to admit. The category runs all the way from minor abuses to major offenses. The chief sources of abuse of public funds occur in the improvement of private property at public expense, the lack of proper supervision, the employment of persons not in need, the operation of projects of doubtful public utility, padded sponsors' contributions, purchase of excess of equipment and hire of equipment at excess rates, operation of projects on which a high percentage of nonrelief labor is required, etc. These and other matters are set forth in the counsel's summary report.

The worst situation which the subcommittee's investigators encountered was in the State of Louisiana. If no other portion of the counsel's summary is perused there is recommended at least a reading of that part and all relative comments and statements both by subcommittee investigators and by W. P. A. officials. Those familiar with the administration of the affairs of that State by the regime which was recently repudiated by the voters of the State must realize the difficulties of operating a W. P. A. program with such sponsorship of projects. The predilections of sponsors, however, are no excuse for lax Federal administration. It is incomprehensible that Federal

officials, at least in Louisiana, were not cognizant of the waste and diversion and misapplication of public funds that were taking place there. It is to the credit of Colonel Harrington that he has made some changes in the administrative organization in Louisiana and is cleaning up the situation although the Federal State administrator during this period is still in office.

The Work Projects Administration is not an agency created by permanent statute. It was created by the President at a time when he had authority to establish the agency to carry out a previous work program. It has been continued from year to year since by authorization of the various emergency relief appropriation acts. The work-relief program does not exist in permanent statutes. Its continuance depends upon the enactment from fiscal year to fiscal year of a combined legislative and appropriation bill. The committee has endeavored each year in considering such a bill to include such changes and additions as will improve the efficiency of the W. P. A. organization and protect the expenditure of the funds appropriated for work relief. In so doing the committee feels that it has complied in the most practical way with the provisions of House Resolution No. 130 insofar as it relates to recommendations for legislation.

Any other recommendation for legislation which might be eligible for the committee to make would relate obviously to permanent legislation with respect to the solution of the national problem of furnishing employment to the needy unemployed. Such a solution cannot be reached solely by a study and investigation of W. P. A. under this resolution of authority. Certainly the committee is not prepared as the result of this investigation to say what the permanent solution of the problem should be nor what the permanent legislation should be as to Federal participation in such a solution. The committee does not recommend a permanent status for W. P. A. It does recommend that continuous study be given to the problem of finding work for the unemployed with a continuance of W. P. A. only as a temporary agency to fill the need until private industry can absorb the unemployed or until it is patent that there is inevitable need for a permanent public employment system of some type.

One fact is obvious at this time. It is not possible within any given comparatively short space of time to shift from the W. P. A. type of work relief to any other system for furnishing work relief to the classes and ages of workers on W. P. A. without causing a hiatus in the employment of many needy individuals. Any change from W. P. A. to any other method of furnishing this same type of work relief needs long-range preparation and planning with ample opportunity for the States, cities, and other cooperating public bodies to get ready to meet their responsibilities.

There is doubt whether any administration of W. P. A., no matter what political party might shape its policy or direct its activities could ever conduct the program and keep it entirely free from criticism of abuses which inherently arise incidental to the contacts of so much of the human element and its frailties. The success and cleanness of W. P. A. must depend almost entirely upon its administrative personnel and management. The provisions of the Emergency Relief Act of 1939 and the Hatch Act have gone far to assist the administrative officers in bringing about improvement.

The subcommittee which conducted this investigation and the hearings on W. P. A. appropriation for 1941 was gratified to have the Federal Works Administrator, Hon. J. M. Carmody, present at almost all of these hearings. The W. P. A. has been under the Federal Works Agency only since July 1 last and the committee feels that the interest evidenced by Mr. Carmody will be manifest in an improvement of the program and its administration.

The committee feels that Colonel Harrington, Commissioner of Work Projects, has made an effort to improve the management of the W. P. A. and has made and is making progress in that direction.

The committee reports to the House that in its opinion the investigation has had a very wholesome effect upon the administration of the work program under the direction of W. P. A. The very fact that an investigating body had been authorized by the House was notice to the entire W. P. A. organization to start to place its house in order. There has been a noticeable trend of better administration commencing with the authorization for the investigation and continuing on a rising curve. The committee expects and believes that this trend will continue. The committee still has funds available and is still authorized to pursue the investigation until the close of the present Congress. As occasion arises it will exercise that authority.

In closing this report the committee desires to express its appreciation for the faithful, conscientious, and capable manner in which the counsel for the subcommittee, Mr. J. O'Connor Roberts, has conducted his part of the work. His direction of the work of investigators and his analysis and presentation of the results of these investigations and other evidence have been thorough and impartial. Commendation and appreciation are also extended to the subcommittee investigators, including those detailed from other agencies, for the arduous, painstaking, and effective duties performed by them.

## ADDITIONAL VIEWS BY MR. CANNON

Following the business depression which reached its height in the early thirties, the Government found itself confronted with the problem of providing for an army of unemployed variously estimated at from 12,000,000 to 18,000,000 and dependents in urgent need of food and shelter in numbers unprecedented in the history of the Nation. To meet this situation the Works Progress Administration was created May 6, 1935.

The new agency was faced with a task of staggering magnitude. Every community in the land must be serviced promptly and effectively. Personnel must be assembled, projects authorized, routine established, work or direct relief provided for every needy family, and billions of dollars disbursed honestly, accurately, and effectively. By December, 2,800,000 were employed. Early in 1936 the number was in excess of 3,000,000. The problem had been solved. In testifying before our committee the chairman of the Conference of Mayors, representing the mayors of every major city in the United States, stated that without that program hardly an American city could have survived.

The salient feature of the program was that it was a work program. Under it men earned their bread by the sweat of their brow. In that respect it was a typically American solution of the problem. In addition the projects were of a character to add materially to the assets of the communities which they served.

Expended in the form of a dole, the funds used in the program would have left behind no visible results, no tangible evidence, save the improved economic conditions which it primarily sought to achieve. But when applied to the construction of public works and facilities it has provided the same measure of relief and rehabilitation and, in addition, has brought to every community in the land permanent contributions to the assets of States and municipalities which could not otherwise have been supplied and the value of which cannot be measured in terms of dollars and cents.

The 4½ years of the operation of the Work Projects Administration, up to January 1, 1940, witnessed the addition of vast increments to the public assets of every State in the Union and practically every city and town of the Nation.

One-seventh of all the highways, roads, and streets in the United States, or more than 457,000 miles, have been built, reconstructed, or improved by W. P. A. workers in 4½ years of operations.

In addition to roads and streets, the largest single classification of W. P. A. projects, the first report covered the construction of airports, airways, and other transportation facilities. For every 10 miles you drive, an average of 1½ miles have been built or improved by W. P. A. workers.

Adopting a familiar form of comparison, the total mileage of highways, roads, and streets built or improved by W. P. A. in 4½ years



would be approximately equal in length to 147 transcontinental highways from New York to Los Angeles, or Seattle.

Twenty-three thousand new public buildings, including more than enough school buildings to supply 1 to each of the 3,070 counties in the United States, are among public improvements the Nation has received in exchange for its work-relief program during the last 4½ years.

But this inventory of construction, imposing as it is, constitutes the least important part of the achievements of the program. For full appraisal of the program it is necessary to consider not only the permanent contributions to communities in the form of physical assets but also the health, educational, cultural, and service programs conducted through W. P. A. nonconstruction projects.

On the professional and service side of the W. P. A. program, the report shows adult education to be an outstanding activity. In addition to 309,000 enrollees studying for citizenship or learning to read or write, vocational-training classes claimed 195,000 students and correspondence work 48,000 in a 2-week period studied. Forums and lectures conducted by W. P. A. project employees had an aggregate attendance of 162,000.

W. P. A. also operated 1,550 nursery schools, providing scientific care and preschool training during the 2 weeks for 43,700 children of unemployed and destitute families, the report shows. Special instruction was given 4,200 institutionalized and handicapped children.

In the health program, it was found in a typical 2-week period that nearly a quarter of a million examinations and treatments were given in W. P. A. operated or staffed medical and dental clinics, and in schools and homes to children and adults who were unable to pay for such services. Nearly 82,500 tests for specific diseases, and more than 17,000 immunization treatments were reported.

Closely related in the effect on the Nation's physical welfare were more than 1,000,000 lunches served by W. P. A. workers on a single day to needy and undernourished children in more than 11,000 schools, the housekeeping assistance given 57,000 needy families in a single month, and manufacture of 218,000,000 garments for the destitute during 4½ years.

Educational services provided by W. P. A. are reaching adults in classes with an aggregate enrollment of more than 1,000,000, the Nation-wide report shows, and more than 300,000 are enrolled in literacy and naturalization classes alone.

On the basis of a special survey last year, when the rolls were larger, the public-recreation activities, supervised by trained W. P. A. workers, were found, in a typical week, to be equivalent to participation for 1 hour each by 15,000,000 persons. Nearly half of this was physical recreation, both indoors and out, and the rest was divided principally between social and cultural recreation. The benefits of such supervised leisure-time activity are readily apparent, particularly in communities with much unemployment, short working hours, and low income.

While the W. P. A. construction program has been building up the physical plant of the Nation, the professional and service projects have been contributing to its health and culture. Most of the millions of persons who this report indicates are deriving benefits from the white-collar projects are in the lowest-income brackets and could

not afford the important services and assistance our project workers have been able to provide. There are communities today in which the only public-health facilities are those provided by W. P. A. or where the only library is staffed by them, or the only opportunity for adults to study is afforded by W. P. A. teachers.

Medical clinics operated by W. P. A. or staffed with W. P. A. assistants provided 119,000 examinations and treatments and dental clinics; 35,000 during the first 2 weeks in January, the report shows. Home visits by W. P. A. nurses and doctors provided 17,000 examinations and treatments. In the schools, 35,000 examinations and treatments of various kinds were given.

Traffic safety also was enhanced by the painting of control lines totaling 4,576 miles in length and the erection of 638,848 traffic signs. In improving road and street lighting, 21,696 light standards were installed, equipping nearly a thousand miles of thoroughfares, and an additional 55,312 light standards were rebuilt or improved along 1,378 miles. Thousands are alive today and able-bodied who but for these safety facilities supplied by W. P. A. would have been principals in the long list of fatalities and casualties which are incident to unheeded hazards of highway and street.

Sewing projects, up to January 1, had completed 48,000,000 men's garments, 59,000,000 women's garments, and 110,000,000 garments for children and infants. Other items, such as towels, sheets, and surgical dressings, aggregated 66,500,000. The articles produced by sewing projects, which comprise the largest single aspect of the W. P. A. nonconstruction program, were distributed by public relief agencies to needy persons.

A feature which is too often overlooked was the preservation of self-respect. By giving the unemployed jobs on useful public projects we have also kept them off local relief rolls and preserved—in many cases, improving—their skills in preparation for the time when they could again find private employment.

In view of this magnificent record unparalleled in modern or ancient history it is startling to read the report of the committee and find no mention of the two outstanding features of the W. P. A.—the millions supplied with work and self-respect and sustenance, the uninterrupted economic routine of the Nation, and this vast increment of permanent improvements unequalled in any land in any similar period. The committee dismisses this stupendous record of accomplishment with the single grudging sentence: "One cannot depreciate the beneficial achievements of W. P. A. either from the standpoint of the work relief furnished to needy persons or from the standpoint of the public improvements that have resulted." And after reading the questions propounded to witnesses by the committee it is plain that the reason they did not "depreciate" them was only because it would have been absurd to have attempted it. Inasmuch as the committee report raises the question of impartiality, those who take the time to read two voluminous transcripts of the investigation will note that there were two classes of witnesses heard by the committee. The first class was made up of the paid investigators and the witnesses they subpoenaed. The other class consisted of those who appeared voluntarily, the governors, the mayors, and a representative of the National Conference of Catholic Charities.

The first class of witnesses invariably testified against W. P. A. Everything they brought in was in criticism of some isolated project or some minor detail of local administration. Much of their testimony was irrelevant. Some of it was later recanted. Some of it, as the Administrator said in his statement to the committee, was "completely untrue" and a great deal of it was past history and obsolescent.

All other witnesses uniformly commended W. P. A. as serving the purpose for which created, providing worth-while projects, under efficient supervision and free from political or subversive influence. Look through the hearings of the printed hearings on this investigation. It is a voluminous record, but it is worth your time because of the remarkable difference in the cross examination accorded the two groups of witnesses. Invariably the statements of those who criticized W. P. A. were unchallenged and the only inquiries addressed to them were for the purpose of bringing out further criticism. While the only questions directed at witnesses who commended W. P. A. took issue with the witness and were of a nature to discredit the favorable testimony. Look through the hearings for yourself. And in all the 2,600 pages you cannot find one question that challenges a criticism of W. P. A. or one question that approves a commendation of W. P. A.

But the most arresting feature of the evidence submitted in this hearing is the fact that in all the debate on the floor in the previous session, the evidence of those criticizing W. P. A. was repeatedly cited, while no favorable testimony of those who approved W. P. A. has been mentioned. The committee had before it some of the most eminent men of the Nation, men especially versed in the subject under investigation and of unimpeachable integrity, testifying under oath, and yet in all the debate in support of this bill there is not a word from any of them, while the testimony of ne'er-do-wells, fired or demoted by W. P. A., men whom W. P. A. had refused to employ, men with a grudge against W. P. A., is set forth in detail.

The most eminently qualified witness who appeared before the committee during the hearing was Monsignor O'Grady, who has been actively engaged in welfare work since 1912, is the author of books on the subject, and has supervised the construction of hospitals, schools, and other church buildings. He is the secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities and has set up most of the local agencies of that organization throughout the United States. He has within the past year visited more States and more counties in the States and has personally inspected more W. P. A. projects than any other witness who testified before the committee. His testimony is the most pertinent and the most authoritative of the entire hearing.

We also had before the committee a man who had never been able to hold a job in his life. He could not even hold a W. P. A. job. So far as W. P. A. was concerned, he had never been outside his own State until he came to Washington with expenses paid by the committee.

The testimony of these two men did not agree on any point. They testified on the same subject and in no instance were they in even remote agreement. And yet when the testimony of witnesses was cited yesterday in the debate here by the gentlemen on both sides of the aisle in charge of this investigation, Monsignor O'Grady was not even mentioned. His testimony was ignored and discredited by

citation of the unsupported opinions of the ne'er-do-well who had contradicted him.

Of course, an expenditure of such unprecedented amounts—in so broad a field, along new and untrodden paths, without blueprints or formulas from the past—is inevitably attended by complaint and criticism, and no doubt there is ample occasion for both. "Men given work who do not deserve it"—"men denied work who should have it"—political exploitation—waste—favoritism—by village, State, or Nation. Militant delegations of Democrats call, write, telegraph, protesting against the prostitution of W. P. A. by Republican foremen for political purposes. Militant Republicans vigorously protest against the use, by Democratic foremen, of W. P. A. positions to control the election of constables and school directors, not to mention Senators and Presidents. And all of them are more or less justified. For in the enlistment of personnel in a huge organization extending across the continent you cannot change every Democrat and every Republican to a cloistered, nonpartisan eunuch "in the twinkling of an eye" or in any other space of time. They are still Democrats. They are still Republicans. They still have their personal prejudices and their local interests to serve. And no amount of announcement of precept or policy from Washington can neutralize them. In every Red Cross drive and every Community Chest campaign, in every church and fraternal program for local relief, the supervising administration is confronted by precisely these same problems. "Those receive who do not need." And "those who deserve are neglected." And political support in church or lodge or school election is solicited on the strength of largess so distributed. But it is a testimonial to American efficiency and American integrity, and a matter of gratification to every American citizen, that in the distribution of billions of dollars through W. P. A. from the back rooms of that dingy yellow brick building on a side street in Washington—from which the W. P. A. was administered—not a dime of the billions that flowed like an avalanche through its doors ever stuck to the hands of the Administrator or the efficient staff that occupied the building with him. That record is one of the brightest chapters in American history and one in which every citizen of the Republic can take pride.

And among all the welter of attempted political maneuvering by the local small-fry ward heelers of all parties, one conclusive and irrefutable record stands out. In the interest of President Roosevelt and Administrator Hopkins, the election in Michigan took precedence over the election in any other State. It was the only State—outside of his own State of New York—in which President Roosevelt went on the air to specifically urge the election of his personal candidates. Certainly if the weight and prestige of the W. P. A. was to be used in any State it would be used in Michigan. What actually was the course of W. P. A. in the Michigan campaign? In September 1938 W. P. A. expenditures in Michigan reached \$14,251,125.45. In October—just when the campaign was hottest and sentiment was crystallizing—expenditures were reduced to \$11,243,614.37. And in November—the month of the election—expenditures were further dropped to \$9,489,342.44. On September 3, 1938, W. P. A. was employing in Michigan 202,296 men—potential voters. On September 17 the number had been reduced to 197,943; on October 1, to 181,176; October 15, to 172,424; October 29, to 165,264; and by

the day of the election, November 8, the number had dropped to 159,139. If W. P. A. was being used for political purposes anywhere in the United States, it would have been used in Michigan. Additional men would have been employed—larger sums would have been expended. But during the heat of the campaign—when the issue hung in the balance—steadily through September and October the number of men was decreased and the amount of money expended was reduced. There could be no more striking or convincing evidence of the nonpartisan integrity of the high command in charge of this stupendous army of voters and the fabulous sums of money being daily expended in every community in the Nation.

A study of the Pennsylvania election is equally convincing. Pennsylvania did not even get the quota to which the State was entitled much less a plethora of jobs for political purposes. And a scrutiny of the rolls shows that the major increases just prior to the election were in the South where there could not possibly have been any occasion for political coercion. The Louisiana charge of political complicity was wholly without foundation and no connection was ever found or could have been found between W. P. A. and local political factions. The Department of Justice made an exhaustive investigation of the State W. P. A. administrator and completely absolved him of any connection with local scandals.

It may be said just as emphatically that the statement in the report that misdeeds "were known to the W. P. A. and nothing was done about them" is not sustained by the facts.

But the one outstanding feature of this investigation has been the attempt to show control of W. P. A. by Communists. It runs throughout the hearings, the effort to show subservieny by the administration of W. P. A. to subversive elements. More time was given to this feature of the investigation than to any other. Paid investigators were sent out to secure reports on it. Whole sessions of the committee were given to the question as to whether the Workers Alliance was communistic or not, a question wholly beside the point because they were never able to show that the Workers Alliance or the A. F. of L. or the C. I. O. controlled W. P. A. in the slightest. Evidence was submitted showing that all three made efforts to keep their membership on the rolls, and that members of all three organizations were on the rolls, but no evidence was ever produced to show control of W. P. A. by any of them. The lengths to which the committee went in its fruitless effort to tar the administration with communistic control is shown by two illustrations which were incorporated in the printed hearings. One is a facsimile of signatures of Communists in a book presented to a Communist by the name of Banta. The only connection was that these men worked on a W. P. A. project. It was never shown that they or any of them in any way controlled W. P. A., had anything to do with the administration of W. P. A., and the book had no bearing on the investigation. It could not have been admitted as testimony under any law of evidence.

The other was a photostat of a membership card in the Communist Party issued to a Negro woman by the name of Frankie Duty. This woman was never employed by W. P. A. at any time, and testified that she had no connection with W. P. A., and her testimony could not have been admitted by the remotest stretch of the imagination, but it was printed in the proceedings and the photograph of her member-

ship card with it. No court of record would have admitted any of this evidence. It had nothing to do with the investigation authorized by the House.

It was shown that Communists worked on projects—along with every other creed and every shade of political and religious belief—but there was not the slightest testimony to show that the W. P. A. was under any subversive influence. The testimony of every unpaid witness was emphatic in denial of any such connection or control. Every mayor, regardless of party, including prominent men of all parties, and in widely separated sections of the country, testified unequivocally to freedom of the W. P. A. administration from subversive influence of any character.

Mr. Speaker, the miracle is that serious criticism can be made of the policies and administration of the W. P. A. The extent and diversity of the activity taxes the comprehension of one not familiar with its rapid development.

Considering the scope of the program operated by the W. P. A., it is interesting to note the statement by Colonel Harrington on April 23 in testifying before the committee:

It seems to me that the investigators' remarks in this connection were based on a complete lack of comprehension as to the size and character of the operation which the W. P. A. is conducting in the field and I would like to say that this is a difficulty which we often encounter. During the past winter we had at least one State in which the W. P. A. organization was employing a number of people equal to the entire enlisted and commissioned strength of the Regular Army of the United States. The total number of employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad System last year was approximately 100,000, which is considerably less than 5 percent of the employment on the W. P. A. program during the past winter months. Employment under many of our district offices is in excess of 25,000. It is very easy for a person drawing knowledge only from what he sees in the Washington office, and especially a person with little experience in operation, to fail to comprehend the very large and complicated operations that are going on in the field.

During its relatively short life the W. P. A. has employed 7,700,000 different persons, each of whom represents a wage earner for a household. Inasmuch as there are about 3.8 persons per family of W. P. A. workers, this means that more than 29,000,000 persons have received some part of their income from the W. P. A. The W. P. A. has operated 250,000 different projects. It has spent over seven and one-half billion dollars of Federal funds and has spent them in such a manner that 85 percent of the total has gone for wages of project workers, 11 percent has gone for the purchase of materials and the rental of equipment, and only 4 percent of all the money has gone for overhead.

It is a record in which every advocate of democratic government may take pride. When it became necessary to provide either work or charity for millions of unemployed—a situation without parallel in the history of the Nation, or of any other nation—it was necessary to adopt programs, institute agencies, and develop an organization without precedent or blue print. It was necessary to provide and spend money on a scale undreamed of except in time of war. The administration met that situation. It formulated a program covering continental United States. It developed an organization comprising millions of employees. It raised and dispensed billions of dollars. It was an undertaking so vast and so intricate as to stagger comprehension. And the investigation shows that in that stupendous



undertaking there is no evidence of corruption or malfeasance on the part of any major official. Of course, in an enterprise of that character without previous experience to serve as a guide, and dealing with every calling, profession, and industry, and with every conceivable class of individuals, there may have been mistakes. That is inevitable. But they have been honest mistakes and they have been corrected and are being corrected as rapidly as they develop. Colonel Harrington charged before the committee that testimony adduced in the investigation was inaccurate, unfair, and obsolete. And his statement was not challenged by any member of the committee. The conditions which he described were too patent to warrant debate, and yet, notwithstanding admission of such testimony, the chairman of the committee conceded that—

So far as the honesty and integrity of the administration of Works Progress Administration is concerned, our investigation has not revealed anything to the contrary.

Of course, it is not 100 percent perfect. That is true of any department of the Government, and would be even more true if they were suddenly organized without previous experience. But that is not to the discredit of the administration. More men have been sent to the penitentiary from the Post Office Department, for example, in the same length of time than from W. P. A.

The facts which will stand out when history is written is that the administration of the W. P. A. has been honest, efficient, and effective. It has achieved the purpose for which it was created. It has provided jobs. It has prevented chaos. It has saved privation and suffering. It has brought men self-respect. It has tided the Nation over an abyss the depths of which cannot be plumbed.

CLARENCE CANNON.

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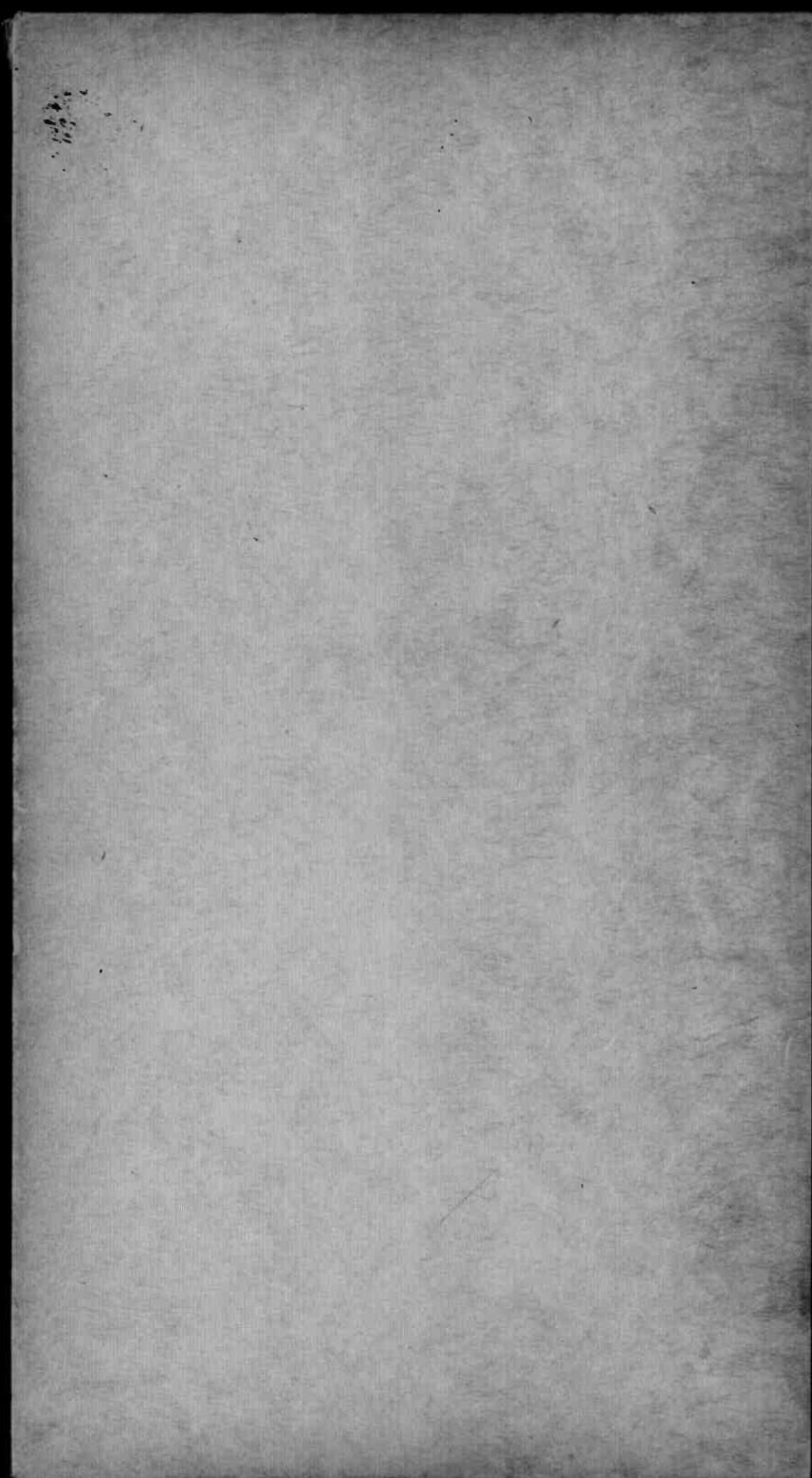
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